

Abraham and his sons, and Jesus Christ. Due to the effects and obstacles brought on by population growth, political shifts and religious fanaticism, our community has evolved like many others and today we have come to be known as the Syriac, Assyrian, Chaldean people.

As modern day Assyrians/Syriac Chaldean people, we do not have our own country, and those of our people that have managed to stay in the homeland, today find themselves referred to as minorities in the land of their forefathers. Our people are known to be a God fearing, peace loving people, and have contributed to Middle Eastern society in a positive way over the years. But, after years of being the target of religious fanaticism, many have fled the ancient homeland, and sought refuge in the diaspora in the hopes of providing safety and stability to their children and their families.

Today, The United States constitutes the largest population of Assyrian Christians in the diaspora. Our people first started arriving in Western New York in the late 19th century, after the Christian massacre in Diyarbakir, Turkey. We witnessed another large influx of immigrants after the Christian genocide in 1915 under the sword of the Ottoman Turks, during which nearly 1 million Armenians and about 500,000 Assyrians were killed. As a result, many of our people left Mardin, Midyat and other cities in Turkey and eventually settled in parts of New York and New Jersey. But after visiting Long Island, it was hard to resist its beautiful green pastures, and its relaxing beaches. Eventually, a small group made their way out and settled there, mainly in parts of Queens, and then later to Nassau County. These immigrants worked hard, and became prominent entrepreneurs mainly in the jewelry and garment industry, trades brought with them from the old country, back in the early 70s. They built homes, grew families and raised children who became lawyers, doctors, teachers, business owners, and upstanding members in the community. Eventually, in 1985, this growing community, now comprised of immigrants from Turkey, Syria, Iraq, and Jordan, became large enough to establish a church where they could all congregate and meet regularly with other Assyrian Americans to preserve their ancient culture and practice their sacred religion. That church was named St. Peter's Syriac Orthodox Church. The community thrived and grew and after years of careful planning an opportunity arose that allowed them to finally purchase their own church. And in 2001, with the purchase of this church in Hicksville that we are gathered in today, we became permanent members of the Long Island community.

Over the years, our American born generation has begun to assimilate into American society and is proud of its American nationality. But this generation is also proud of its ancestral roots and works hard to maintain a balance between its nationality and ethnic heritage. We have always been grateful to our brave people living in our homeland knowing that we rely on them to preserve our ancient culture and language; they are the true torch bearers so to speak. God has somehow given them the strength and courage to stay rooted in their homeland, a feat many of us here could not achieve. And we have always feared that without them, our dwindling culture would undoubtedly face extinction, and our name and language that have survived for centuries would merely be something people hear about in history books. For centuries, it is our ethnic heritage and religion that have made us seem like a threat to governments in the Middle East. Some have forced us to stop speaking Aramaic in our homes with our children, forced

us to hide our crosses, and even forced us to change our names to assimilate into their societies and forget where we came from. They have even turned our century old churches to mosques, and some have even become ashes, along with our ancient archaeological sites. This cycle has been hammering away at our people to the point where they have realized the need for a safe haven, a place in their ancestral homeland that they can call their own again, where they can feel safe and protected, and be who they are. But their voices in the Middle East are being stifled, so we, their American brothers and sisters must be their voice.

We have undertaken this duty to be their voice, not only as Christians and members of this church, but also as human beings and defenders of human, God given rights. Congressman, we attempted to voice our concerns for our persecuted people outside the UN where we rallied for our people back in August. We also voiced our concerns when we wrote to your office pleading for humanitarian aid and help in stopping the barbaric acts of terrorism. And we were so grateful when you replied both to our invitation to the UN rally and reached out to meet with us here at our church today. And now that you are here, and willing to build a relationship with us, we want you to know that our people need help, they are asking for their home back. We need a safe haven for them, in our ancient ancestral land, the Nineveh plains, under the protection of the United Nations so that we can break the cycle of constant persecution threatening our existence for too long. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to acquaint you with our community today. It is our sincere hope that our voices will be heard on behalf of our persecuted community, namely the hundreds of thousands of displaced men, women, and children suffering at the hands of ISIS today.

Thank you.

COMMENDING MONGOLIA

HON. ENI F.H. FALEOMAVAEGA

OF AMERICAN SAMOA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 14, 2014

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend the Honorable President Tsakhiagiin Elbegdorj, His Excellency Ambassador Altangerel Bulgaa, the State Great Hural, and the people of Mongolia for their commitment to the development of a stable and prospering democracy. Since establishing diplomatic relations with the United States in 1987, Mongolia has successfully conducted six presidential and six legislative elections. Additionally, Mongolia has supported international peace efforts by deploying troops to Iraq from 2003 through October 2008, and now has approximately 350 troops in Afghanistan supporting Coalition operations.

Mongolia has also achieved remarkable success over the past two decades as one of Asia's fastest growing economies. Since 2003, Mongolia's GDP has more than doubled. With one of the world's largest copper and gold mines, such as the Oyu Tolgoi, which boasts one of the biggest metallurgical and thermal coal deposits as well, Mongolia is on track to become a thriving mining center in the Asian region. Additionally, Mongolia's trade with the United States has surged in the last few years, making the United States Mongolia's third largest trading partner.

Today the relationship between our two countries continues to grow and strengthen. I

look forward to the continuing cooperation and comprehensive partnership between Mongolia and the United States based on our shared values and common strategic interests, and I have every confidence that Mongolia will continue to flourish as a relevant and established presence in the region.

IN RECOGNITION OF JAMES VINCENT TASA

HON. JACKIE SPEIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 14, 2014

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Chief James Vincent Tasa for his 32 years of service with the Pacifica Police Department. Chief Tasa has been an exemplary leader and confidant for his colleagues and the residents of Pacifica.

Chief Tasa first joined the Pacifica Police Department as an officer in 1982. Ten years later he was promoted to the rank of Police Sergeant and in 2002 he was promoted to the rank of Police Captain. He successfully completed the POST California Law Enforcement Command College in 2007 and in 2011 he was promoted to his current position as Pacifica's Chief of Police. Though he officially retired in February of this year, he continued to serve as Chief until now to allow the City of Pacifica time to search for his replacement.

Chief Tasa has received numerous awards for his exemplary work as a law enforcement officer, including the Police Officer of the Year Award by the San Mateo County Trial Lawyers Association, the Captain's Award, and countless commendations from the community, citizens and law enforcement professionals.

Chief Tasa has approached every aspect of his work with professionalism, integrity and a refreshing sense of optimism and humor. He has earned the respect and admiration of his fellow officers and residents. I've had the honor to work with Jim over the last three years to combat human trafficking in San Mateo County. His work and collaboration with all other chiefs of police have been essential to find cures for this epidemic of modern day slavery.

During his three decades with the police department, Jim has witnessed many memorable moments. One of them is without a doubt the afternoon of August 19, 2011. He accompanied Mayor Mary Ann Nihart and other city officials on a mayor's walk on Palmetto Avenue to meet local business owners. Towards the end of the walk, they opened the door of a "flower shop" and were met by an unmistakable aroma—the flower shop was a medical marijuana dispensary. Jim had to deliver the bad news to the owner that he had a false license and therefore needed to shut his flower shop.

Jim is married to Susan Kae Tasa and they have two sons, Nick and Ryan.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the House of Representatives to join me in honoring Jim Tasa for his outstanding service keeping the residents of Pacifica safe. His leadership and warmth will be remembered long after he moves on to the next chapter of his life.